



ENTOMOPHILA ALBOGULARIS: *Gould.*

J. Gould and H. C. Richter del et lith.

C. Falkenand Imp.

ENTOMOPHILA ALBOGULARIS, *Gould.*

White-throated Honey-eater.

Entomophila? albogularis, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part X. p. 137.

Me-lud-be-re, Aborigines of Port Essington.

THIS new species is a native of the northern portion of Australia. "I first met with it," says Mr. Gilbert, "on Mayday Island in Van Diemen's Gulf, where it appeared to be tolerably abundant; I afterwards found it to be equally numerous in a large inland mangrove swamp near Point Smith. It is an extremely active little bird, constantly flitting from branch to branch and taking irregular flights, during which it utters its pretty Goldfinch-like song; it also pours forth its agreeable melody for a length of time without intermission while sitting on the topmost branches of the trees. I never observed it in any other than swampy situations, or among the mangroves bordering the deep bays and creeks of the harbours; small breaks in the mangroves formed by little coves or bays having a narrow entrance, and thus secluded from the effects of every wind, are the situations it chooses for the purpose of rearing its young. Its small pensile nest is suspended from the extremity of a weak projecting branch in such a manner that it hangs over and at about two feet from the water, the bird always selecting a branch bearing a sufficient number of leaves to protect the entrance, which is invariably at the top; in form the nest is deep and cup-like, and is composed of narrow strips of the soft paper-like bark of the *Melaleuca*, matted together with small vegetable fibres, with which also the nest is firmly bound to the branch; the inside is slightly lined with soft grass. The eggs appear to vary from two to three in number, as I found a nest in the latter part of November and another in the early part of December which contained three in each, while a third procured towards the end of January had only two; they are rather lengthened in form, and not very unlike those of *Malurus cyaneus* in the colour and disposition of their markings; their ground colour being white, thinly freckled all over with bright chestnut-red, particularly at the larger end; they are nine lines long and six lines broad. During the breeding-season it exhibits considerable pugnacity of disposition, and instead of its usual pretty note, utters a chattering and vociferous squeaking; at other times it is rather familiar and may be easily approached.

"The stomach was very small, but tolerably muscular, and its food consisted of insects generally."

Head dark grey; all the upper surface brown; wings and tail darker brown; primaries, secondaries and basal half of the tail-feathers margined with wax-yellow; throat pure white; chest and flanks reddish buff; centre of the abdomen and under tail-coverts white; irides bright reddish brown; bill blackish grey; feet bluish grey.

The figures are those of the two sexes, and the nest of the natural size.